



Washington State Patrol State Fire Service Mobilization Report

2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington State Patrol (WSP) is required under RCW 43.43.965 to report on an annual basis the following information for each emergency or disaster in which the Washington State Fire Service Mobilization Plan was used for purposes other than fire suppression, and reimbursement made under RCW 43.43.961:

- The type and nature of the disaster or emergency;
- The reasons why the host jurisdiction and mutual aid resources were exhausted;
- The additional risk resources provided under the mobilization plan;
- The cost incurred by the state patrol;
- The amount of reimbursement made under RCW 43.43.961 to the host jurisdiction and each non-host jurisdiction providing all risk resources; and
- An assessment and any recommendations of actions that can be taken by the host jurisdiction and its mutual aid network to prevent future use of the fire mobilization plan for similar disasters or emergencies.

STATE FIRE SERVICE MOBILIZATION

State Fire Service Mobilization was authorized one time for an incident other than fire suppression. State Mobilization was not used to preposition any firefighting resources.

On **September 14, 2022**, Chief John R. Batiste authorized the use of the Mobilization Plan to assist in the evacuation and relocation of residents of the Montesano Care & Rehabilitation facility in Grays Harbor County. Due to a significant structure fire in the facility, residents were evacuated from the facility, and transported to area hospitals and licensed care facilities.

The Grays Harbor County fire service and its automatic/mutual aid partners do not have sufficient Basic Life Support and Advance Life Support transport-capable units to transport a large number of patients to facilities capable of providing appropriate care in a reasonable amount of time. Mobilization was used to effect the transport of over seventy residents to appropriate facilities in approximately three hours.

RESOURCES

The resources provided to Grays Harbor County were Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support transport units (ambulances), and qualified personnel, including qualified supervisory personnel.

COST

As of November 30, 2022, the overall Mobilization cost incurred by WSP is \$8,145,000 (estimated). Of that amount, an estimated \$70,000 was for Montesano Care & Rehabilitation response, \$15,000 (estimated) for a large commercial structure fire response in an island community, and the remaining \$8,075,000 (estimated) for traditional wildfire response.

The amount already reimbursed to local jurisdictions is \$1,900,000. The WSP anticipates reimbursing an additional \$6,175,000 (estimated) for invoices not yet received from local jurisdictions and state agencies. Estimated WSP costs are \$115,000.

In 2022, No “host” entities received reimbursement for non-wildfire uses of the Mobilization Plan.

ASSESSMENT

Most jurisdictions outside of the metropolitan Puget Sound area lack sufficient publicly-funded (municipal fire department/fire district) or private Emergency Medical Service (EMS) resources to effect the large-scale evacuation and transportation of residents from even the smallest licensed care facilities, which include hospitals, nursing homes, and other residential care facilities. In jurisdictions where there are sufficient public safety resources to carry out this type of evacuation/transportation, that activity would significantly impact the availability of resources to respond to 911-originated calls for service, placing the public at risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Washington State Patrol recommends that local fire agencies providing EMS develop and exercise plans for the evacuation and transport of residents in the licensed care facilities within their jurisdictions, and that those activities are included in their Regional Fire Defense Plan. These activities should be coordinated with the Department of Health and the Department of Social and Health Services, as they are the state agencies principally charged with the licensing of facilities providing skilled nursing services. The Department of Health is also the lead agency for Emergency Support Function #8 (Public Health and Medical Services) in the Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.